



Planning Program Guidelines

What Is National Cybersecurity Career Awareness Week?

The National Cybersecurity Career Awareness Week (NCCAW) focuses local, regional, and national interest to inspire, educate, and engage children through adults to pursue careers in cybersecurity. National Cybersecurity Career Awareness Week takes place during November's [National Career Development Month](#), and each day of the week-long celebration provides for learning about the contributions, innovations, and opportunities that can be found by exploring cybersecurity as a field of study or career choice.

During the week, learners of all ages, educators, parents, employers, and the community will participate in a national recognition of how cybersecurity plays a vital role in the lives of Americans and how building a national cybersecurity workforce enhances America's national security and promotes economic prosperity.

Key Messages

Use these key messages to craft your own communications to your contacts. National Cybersecurity Career Awareness Week:

- Creates excitement and increases public awareness and engagement in building a strong cybersecurity workforce
- Emphasizes the demand and opportunities in the field of cybersecurity
- Increases awareness around the multiple career options within the field of cybersecurity
- Highlights the numerous pathways to enter the cybersecurity career field
- Advances the [NICE Strategic Plan](#) objective to inspire cybersecurity career awareness with students
- Increases participation of women, minorities, veterans, persons with disabilities, and other underrepresented populations in the cybersecurity workforce

Not sure where to start in planning a program for NCCAW? The following are some guidelines to consider when planning a public NCCAW event.

Determine your target audience. Before developing programs about careers in cybersecurity, it is

important to determine who you are trying to reach and why. Understand the needs and interests of your audience. Some potential target audiences include:

- Displaced workers
- IT employees transitioning to cybersecurity
- Veterans
- Recent college graduates
- K-12 students (elementary, middle, or high school)
- Higher education faculty
- Higher education career counselors and career navigators
- Parents
- K-12 educators, administrators, school counselors

Select your topic. To launch a successful program your topic should be of direct benefit to your audience. Include information about local resources and services that will enable the audience to take advantage of the information they have received at your event.

Determine your staff needs to execute your program. Do you have the staff needed to run a successful event, or do you need to recruit volunteers? Be sure to define roles and responsibilities so that staff and volunteers know what's expected of them.

Develop a budget for the event and plan accordingly.

Do you need to seek outside funding? If so, consider the following:

- Approach local businesses. They're often looking for ways to promote their involvement in the community and will provide financial assistance in exchange for their name or logo on publicity or promotional materials. Other groups to consider are:
 - Meetups (women in cybersecurity, hacker groups, cybersecurity clubs)
 - State and local Chamber of Commerce
 - State and local Departments of Economic and Workforce Development
 - Centers of Academic Excellence
 - State and local Technology Councils
 - Local Chapters of Professional Organizations
- Don't forget about in-kind donations. Gifts of materials, services such as printing, food, or event space are very valuable.

Collaborate with other organizations to reduce costs and share responsibilities. Combining resources may also help to attract larger audiences, obtain media coverage, and secure event space, speakers, and volunteers.

Select a format. Would your topic be better presented by a single presenter, several presenters, or a panel discussion? Do you want to have audience participation? Will your audience respond well to hands-on demonstrations, lab tours, or other forms of interactive activities such as questionnaires and quizzes?

Potential formats include:

- Conference (2-day, 1-day, ½ day)
- Workshop (full-day, ½ day, a couple of hours)
- Open House
- Job Shadowing

- Career fair
- Student Assembly
- After-school Program
- Webinar

Select a location. Keep the following in mind:

- Does it work for the event format? Can it accommodate the audience size?
- Is there adequate parking and public transportation?
- Is it geographically well situated for your intended audience?
- Are there provisions for handicapped guests?
- What are the electrical and audio-visual capabilities?
- Is there internet access?
- Can the venue provide additional staffing?

Select a date/time. The timing of the event should be determined by what is most appropriate for your target audience. For example, schedule family events for weekend afternoons; programs for students during the school day; and events for working professionals on weekday evenings. Before finalizing a date, don't forget to investigate other activities and events in your area that may attract the very same audience as your proposed program.

Select your speaker(s). Review your plans for audience, topic, location, timing, and format with prospective speakers. Select a speaker with good “people” skills who can interact well with your audience.

Consider the following tips for finding a speaker(s):

- Contact local government, industry, or college/university departments with cybersecurity or related programs of study. Many government and industry professionals are happy to share their expertise. It also allows local organizations to showcase their products and services and aid in recruitment—a win-win for all.
- Contact Meetup groups, state and local Technology Councils, state and local Chambers of Commerce, and state and local Departments of Economic and Workforce Development. Staff can reach into membership to help recruit speakers.

Work with your speaker(s) to develop the content of the program and prepare them to speak on the audience’s level. The more precise you are about the interests of your audience and the message you wish to convey, the more effective your speaker(s) and program will be.

If you would like press coverage of your program, develop a media plan to identify your target media outlets and establish a schedule of communication. Fact sheets and press releases on your topic are often a useful tool for the media.

Plan for the day of the event. Things to think about in advance of your event include registration, signage, hand-outs and materials, press participation, and audio-visual needs. Also, know where services are located at your event site, including toilets, handicapped facilities and access, elevators/stairs, emergency aid, and public transportation.

Allow time for follow-up. In addition to completing the administrative details of the event, it is important to “close out” your program properly.

- Elicit comments and suggestions from your audience and share any feedback with your speakers and co-sponsors.
- Thank your speakers and co-sponsors/hosts (if any).
- Debrief with staff and prepare a brief summary of the event for your records and assess the program's effectiveness in carrying your message to your target audience. This will help you and your organization plan for future activities.

**We would love to learn more about your program.
Submit an overview of your event to nccaw@nist.gov.**